

From one kid from Akron to another, LeBron, we are proud of you.

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EDWARDS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last night, the President had a real opportunity to put partisanship aside and speak to all Americans, not just Democrats or Republicans, but to all Americans.

Instead of sending a unifying message, we heard even more divisive rhetoric from the President. There were a lot of people who were here willing to work with him across the aisle to get good things done for our people and our constituents all across the country, and I consider myself one of them.

But the President makes it very difficult to do this when he continues to push lies about Republicans and our policies.

My constituents in the Central Valley are struggling to put food on their table and gas in their tanks because of this administration.

Unfortunately, the President failed to take accountability for many problems Americans across the country are experiencing under his failed leadership, from the rising cost of energy to the fentanyl coming across our open border.

One issue that hits home for me in particular was what President Biden said last night about energy. During his address, the President told the Nation that under his watch, energy bills and gas prices are going down.

This is not true for my constituents. Over the last few years, my office has received countless calls from people whose natural gas bills have tripled due to the high price of natural gas in California.

These are the same people who over the summer were paying over \$6 a gallon to drive to work or to take their kids to school. These energy prices are crushing working-class families in my community and across the country.

In my district, the oil and gas industry is critical, not just for energy production but for the entire community.

The industry is responsible for billions of dollars in State and local tax revenue that funds vital community services like public schools, hospitals, and law enforcement.

Kern County is the leading energy provider for the State of California and the number seven oil-producing county in the Nation.

Yesterday, my guest to the President's address was Chad Hathaway. Chad owns and operates an independent oil company in Bakersfield and knows firsthand just how disastrous the energy policies of this administration have been.

Energy producers like Chad not only provide resources to California but the entire country. We have the resources right here in our own back yard, and we can and should be using them.

While we as a country should continue to develop and pursue other sources of energy, we cannot abandon traditional energy sources like the President made clear last night that he wants to do.

The Biden administration's energy policies are destroying affordable energy, high-paying jobs, and energy security for our Central Valley families.

There are a lot more stories to share about the impacts of this administration's policies, and tonight, House Republicans have reserved some time to respond to the President's address last night in this Chamber and to discuss some of the problems currently facing our country and the Republican vision for addressing them.

I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), my good friend.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) for handling this Special Order tonight and bringing our colleagues here to talk about the reality of this State of the Union Address that we experienced here less than 24 hours ago.

I appreciate what you said, and I thought it was appropriate that you brought as your guest a constituent who is in the energy industry because you explained how domestic energy production has been decimated by this President and his administration and how it is having an untold cost on the American people.

But I wanted to begin with a quote, and I want to encourage my colleagues to listen carefully to these words of warning. This is really important.

"The tsunami of debt created by the policies of this administration has to go somewhere. . . .

"But as the rest of the world copes with the waves of U.S. debt, we are now all in the same leaky boat. There is just so much of our debt other nations want to hold. The more of it they accumulate, the closer we are to the day when they will not want any more.

"When that happens, slowly or rapidly, our interest rates will go up, the value of their U.S. bonds will drop, and we will all have big problems. We need both more awareness and more understanding of this fundamental threat to our economic well-being and the global economy.

"But the roots of that threat lie in the disastrous policies of this administration.

"Because this massive accumulation of debt was predicted, because it was foreseeable, because it was unnecessary, because it was the result of willful and reckless disregard for the warnings that were given and for the fundamentals of economic management, I am voting against the debt limit increase."

Now, do you want to guess who said that? It was not Speaker MCCARTHY. It was not Leader MCCONNELL. In fact, it wasn't any Republican.

That quote that I just read to you is from Joe Biden himself when he was a Senator in 2006. If he was honest, he would have used that same language right up here last night, but he didn't. Of course, he wasn't honest.

By the way, in addition to his vocal opposition when he was a Senator in 2003 and 2006, Senator Joe Biden joined Senate Democrats in opposing clean debt limit increases.

In 2004, he missed the vote, but he said publicly he would have opposed it there, as well. So three times as a Senator he opposed the debt limit increase.

Well, he is singing a completely different tune now. Everybody heard it.

Mr. Speaker, President Biden's address to the Nation last night was a missed opportunity. Our country is mired in crisis after crisis of the President's own making: at home, at our border, abroad.

Simply put, the President's rhetoric last night didn't match the reality that most Americans have been experiencing since he took office 2 years ago.

John Adams said, "Facts are stubborn things," and the actual state of our Union is more accurately summed up by one word: decline.

Let's talk about just a couple of those facts very quickly. Just a snapshot. When President Joe Biden took office, we had peace through strength.

We had American energy independence—actually, dominance. We had lower consumer prices, and we had inflation at about 1.4 percent.

But since he took over 2 years ago, now we have war through weakness, we have foreign energy dependence, we have sky-high consumer prices, and the inflation rate in December was 6.5 percent.

Now, you tell me. Are you better off today than you were 2 years ago?

No. And that is what the polls indicate.

Most Americans say and respond to the polls that they are doing worse off financially, and in many other respects, since this President took over.

Right now, prices are still rising, crime is rising, drug overdoses are rising, illegal immigration is rising, and our country's leadership looks embarrassed and weak on the world stage.

Republicans urged President Biden to take advantage of the state of the Union to chart a new direction, to get us out of this mess, to reverse the policies that have gotten us into this, to accept responsibility for the declining state of our country, and pledge to do better.

But you know what? He didn't do that.

He wouldn't have been the first American President to seek a reset. Presidential resets are common. They are often necessary, but he wouldn't acknowledge that last night. He did the opposite.

The reality is that families right now across this country, in my district and in all of our districts—everybody knows this—are still paying more for just about everything, including food and gasoline and electricity and rent, in every category.

According to all the polls, they can feel it, regardless of what this President wants to say from this podium in this Chamber.

Here is what we need to do. We need to curb the wasteful government spending that is raising the price of groceries and gas and cars and housing and growing our national debt, and we need to increase take-home pay.

We need to create good-paying jobs and bring stability to the economy through pro-growth policies that will enliven our economy and broaden the pathway out of poverty for more people, but that is not what this President is suggesting.

You know what their solution was last night and every day here?

More government growth and more spending.

Does anybody really think that our national debt continuing to climb unchecked is an acceptable outcome in this year's debt ceiling talks?

Joe Biden himself didn't think that. At least he didn't when he was a Senator. If no one thinks that, then let's start doing something about it.

President Biden could have started last night, but he didn't. It was a missed opportunity. I think it was shameful, and I think the American people know better.

I am grateful to my friend from California for yielding the time, and I will turn it back over to him.

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One of the things that the President said last night was that he wants to source materials from the U.S.; and as we have talked a little bit about energy, we have seen pictures of parts of the Amazon rainforest demolished so they can continue to drill wells over there.

So we are importing, we are damaging environments, and we are not doing it here in the U.S., creating American jobs doing it in the best way we possibly can in the world, delivering clean energy for our American people. It is totally frustrating, so I appreciate the comments from Mr. JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

Mr. NORMAN. I thank the gentleman for hosting this all important subject, really, on our entire country and the state of it.

Last night, Americans tuned in to the State of the Union. The State of

the Union is a very important address for the American people for a lot of different reasons. One, the history of it.

Since 1790, 233 years that the President has addressed a body that has all three branches of government, the executive branch, the House, the Supreme Court, the cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all were here last night.

Now, what is the purpose of the State of the Union? The State of the Union is where the leader of the free world gives a vision for America. They give their solutions to problems facing America. They give answers to questions that have been asked by the American people.

What we saw last night from President Biden was a total embarrassment. What we saw last night was a President who was more eager to criticize this great Nation than he was to heal our wounds.

Here are my questions: Mr. Biden, why did you not offer solutions to these problems?

Why did you not offer solutions to the invasion of our border to the tune of five million illegals that are crossing our border every day?

Why do you not believe that a nation is not a nation unless it has borders?

Mr. Biden, why did you not address the drugs as a result of the invasion at the border, the drugs, fentanyl, primarily coming from China to Mexico, back into our Nation that are killing thousands of people, 100,000 last year?

Why do you not care about that?

Mr. Biden, why did you not address our gas and oil problems?

Why did you shut the Keystone pipeline?

Why do you like foreign oil of OPEC nations, many who don't like us, example, Venezuela, Iraq, Iran? Why do you like their oil better than American oil?

Mr. President, why did you not address our national debt?

Why did you not have solutions to what you are going to propose in a budget that you should have already produced that you have not done?

Mr. President, why have you not addressed our crime problem? You cannot turn on any TV station without seeing the blue sirens, the deaths of many innocent people, the rampant crime that is up double digits in every city of America. Instead, you chose to criticize our great police force.

Why did you not address the problem that we are all having with the police shortages that exist in this very Capitol?

Why did you not address, Mr. President, our national security threat from China?

Why did you not address the balloon that was allowed to go over our great country for 8 days?

Why did you shoot it over the Atlantic Ocean and not the Pacific?

Why did you not shoot it over Alaska?

Why did you not shoot it down or allow it to be shot down over Montana, which the worst that could have hap-

pened would be a deer and an antelope that may have been hurt from a falling balloon?

Mr. President, why did you not answer why you left \$80 billion of our finest military equipment in Afghanistan? Why did you turn that over to our enemies?

Why did you close Bagram, the Bagram base, our military base, which is strategically located?

Why did you not make sure every American was out before you pulled the military out?

Mr. President, these are just a few of the questions that you are directly responsible for, and the reason you did not answer them is because your position is you are causing them and it matters not to you.

Last night, it became apparent we have a President who not only refuses to acknowledge the realities that we face today, but you are doubling down on it. The spending that you are now placing on the American taxpayer will bankrupt this country, and you are perfectly content to move along with this insane spending that this country cannot take.

We are at the end of the runway with the spending that you are putting on the American people. The taxpayers deserve better. The American people deserve better.

Now I am happy to join my Republican colleagues; we are going to come up with a budget. We are going to put this country back on a path of financial security. Financial security is national security, and I am happy to say that we are finally willing to address it.

No longer can we turn a blind eye, and no longer can we allow the leader of the free world to inflict the pain that he is inflicting on America.

I am proud of my Republican colleagues to address this; and I will say this. I will say one good thing this President did in his speech. He united all true conservatives to fight the policies that are destroying this Nation and that he is willing to happen on his watch.

I thank the gentleman for doing this.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments. The gentleman from South Carolina made a great point. We know that history has happened in this building over the years, and this floor has been used since 1848.

I don't know if I have ever seen a crowd respond like they did last night, but I think it was an appropriate response, being that the President, for the first time in I think in my ninth or tenth time attending one of these said something that he knew was false about an entire party. It was unfortunate to see.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

I also want to thank my sister, Crystal, and my other sister, April, for being with me here today.

Mr. Speaker, last night, we heard President Biden's fairy tale version of the state of our union.

I will tell you, Americans know he just doesn't line up with what they are seeing and feeling out there. They know our economy is in shambles, and they also know that the only thing higher than food and energy prices out there right now are Chinese spy balloons.

Our border is in a mess, and the whole time, our government is over trying to secure Ukraine's border.

The bottom line is that our country is suffering under the weight of the Biden administration's America-last policies and, unfortunately, last night, yeah, he is doubling down. He is doubling down on the failed agenda that brought us here.

The only answers that he offers are bigger government and more control over our lives.

I wish I could say I was surprised, but these are always the solutions offered by the other side of the aisle, the same ones that got us in this mess.

So let's set the record straight.

Mr. Speaker, reopening the economy after his party shut it down, that is not creating jobs. More taxes and regulations on small businesses will not promote growth. Bringing business back to America from overseas just to tax and regulate them will not return jobs to our shores.

More spending and debt, that definitely will not lower inflation. Telling Americans to kick back, put your feet up, depend on the government, wait on a check, and hope for a better life, doesn't empower them to reach their potential because, as we know, no successful person built a career or provided for their family by hanging around and waiting for the government to redistribute other people's income.

It is time to let Americans run with the ball by letting them keep more of their hard-earned money, getting government off their backs, paying down our national debt, and promoting self-reliance and personal responsibility again in this country.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his comments.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN), who I had the honor of doing a little shooting with in the last few weeks down there; had a great time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California for this Special Order. I appreciate it very much.

Predictably, the President spent 72 minutes trying to sell us another bill of goods last night. He is so out of touch with reality that he thinks Americans are actually buying what he said.

But his time would have been much better spent apologizing to the country for being one of the weakest, if not the weakest, Commander in Chief in the history of our country.

From his botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, to his mismanagement of

the economy, to his horrific border crisis, Joe Biden is a President of failure.

In just 2 years, he has successfully made us less on all fronts, less profitable, less sustainable, less safe, less prosperous, less free. His consistent weakness on the world stage has emboldened our adversaries and sent our allies running. I don't say this lightly.

You don't have to look hard for examples. The Chinese surveillance balloon that he allowed to fly across country, our entire country, last week, comes to mind. It took him 4 days to shoot it down and, yet he wants us to believe that he is being tough on China.

Give me a break.

The world is full of wolves. They know America is being led by a sheep.

President Biden spoke for over an hour, and yet he failed to thank our Border Patrol agents, mention border security, or take responsibility for the thousands of Americans dying from fentanyl that is being smuggled across our open and erased southern border.

Instead, he called for mass amnesty for millions of illegal aliens.

Nearly 300 Americans die of an overdose every single day. That is almost as many as our daily casualties during World War II. Think about that.

But if we are being honest, we all expected nothing more than a speech that left truth waiting on the sidelines. That is exactly what we got.

House Republicans have done more to restore and strengthen America in our first month in power than the Democrats have done in the last 2 years because where the left prioritizes authoritarian-style control, Republicans believe in the freedom that our forebears fought and died for.

As Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders so eloquently said last night, "America is the greatest country the world has ever known because we are the freest country that the world has ever known."

We don't bend to a woke mob pushing insanity or insane policies over common sense.

Republicans serving in this esteemed Chamber stand united and will be the hammer that shatters the Democrats' radical agenda. We are committed to ensuring America is secure and is strong, and is free. This is a promise that we will keep.

We will not leave you in the lurch. We are fighting for you and the American Dream that we all love.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, we have run out of speakers, but just closing comments here.

I have been here for a few years, and I have had the opportunity to watch a lot of Presidents speak. In those years that I have been here, I have had some tough votes, I have watched some—I have made some tough comments.

But what I saw yesterday was a disappointment in my view. To see a President get up and say some of the things he said, to attack an entire

party when he knows there are people in this group here that are willing to work with him to actually help the American people, try to solve the problems that our folks need us to solve for them; it was frustrating. That was why I took the opportunity to be here today.

I am always looking for those opportunities to work with whichever President it may be; if it was President Obama or President Trump or now President Biden. There are always places we can work together. We have got a lot of things that need to be resolved for the American people.

What I saw last night was an opportunity that was missed by this President and, hopefully, he will be able to make that up, and we can get to work for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President. Members are further reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

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CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I am very honored to be a Member in this Chamber of the House of Representatives, very proud to have been blessed to be born an American citizen, and very proud to be raised by my immigrant parents in this great country in a community called Pacoima.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Black History Month.

My neighborhood of Pacoima has a long and rich history of wonderful, beautiful, amazing Black Americans, untold stories and uncelebrated heroes who have shaped the San Fernando Valley and my neighborhood of Pacoima, the community I call home, the community in which my immigrant parents raised my 10 brothers and sisters and me.

This is the community that gave us our first Latino United States Senator to represent the great State of California, Senator ALEX PADILLA.

A little-known fact is that the first Congressmember from Pacoima and San Fernando High School is my esteemed colleague, the Honorable BARBARA LEE. As a teenager, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE began her activism when she refused to accept the segregation of her high school cheerleading squad.

Rather than accept this injustice, she challenged the White majority school and turned to the local chapter of the